



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

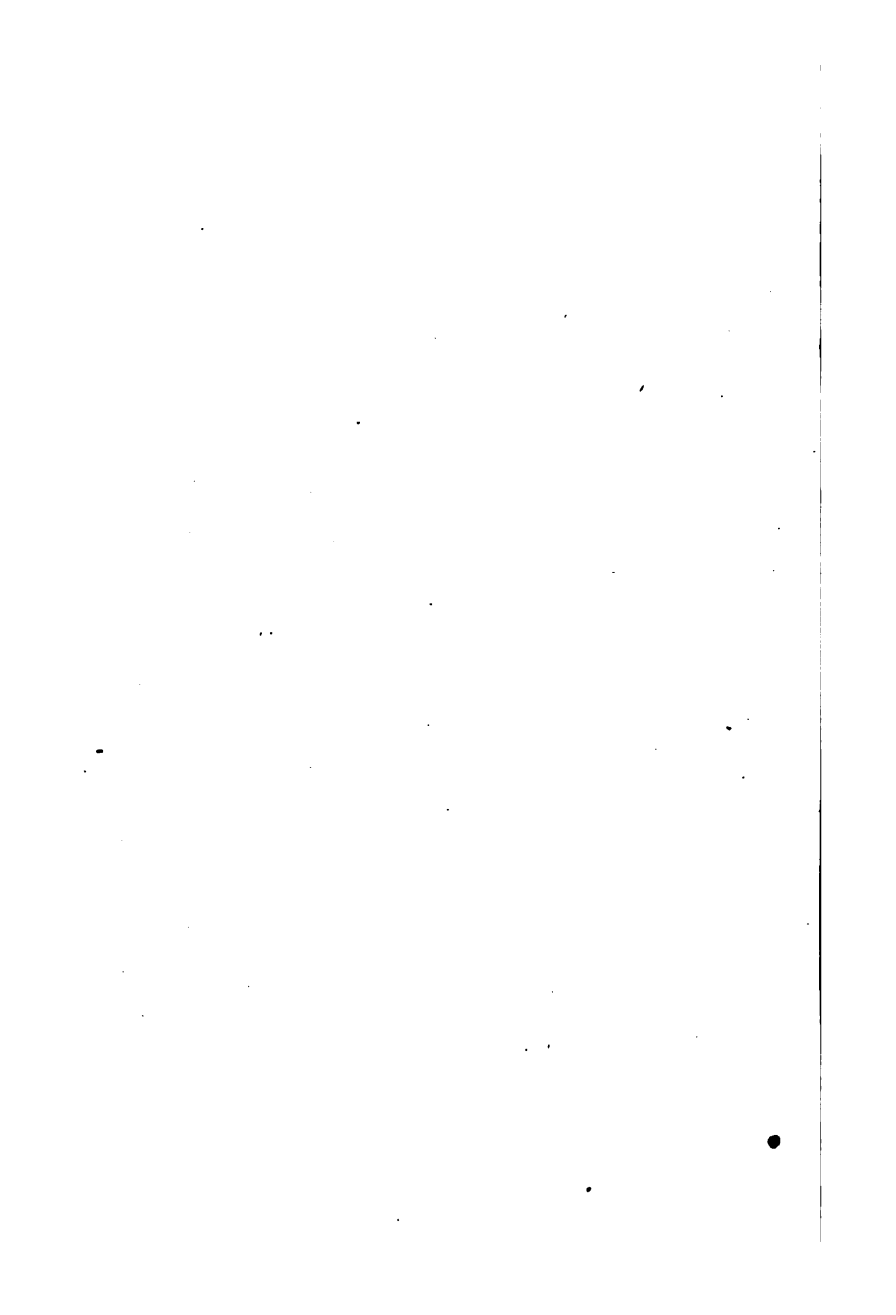
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

ORAL TEACHING
NOT
ORAL TRADITION

43. 954.







ORAL TEACHING

NOT

ORAL TRADITION

IN THINGS NECESSARY TO SALVATION,

THE DOCTRINE OF

SCRIPTURE, REASON, AND ANTIQUITY.

BY

THE REV. C. C. TOWNSEND, A.M.

Rector of Kilmacabea, Diocese of Ross.

"Men ought to take heed of rendering God's church by two kinds of controversies. The one is, when the matter of the point controverted is too small and light, not worth the heat and strife about it, kindled only by contradiction. For as it is noted by one of the Fathers, Christ's coat indeed had no seam; but the church's vesture was of divers colours: whereupon he saith, "in veste varietas sit, scissura non sit:" they be two things, unity and uniformity. The other is, when the matter of the point controverted is great; but it is driven to an over-great subtilty and obscurity; so that it becometh a thing rather ingenious than substantial."—LORD BACON.

LONDON: NISBET & Co. DUBLIN: W. CURRY, JUN. & Co.
CORK: GEORGE PURCELL.

1843.

THE PROFITS OF THIS WORK WILL BE GIVEN TO THE
PASTORAL AID SOCIETY, CORK.

TO THE READER.

“Unto a Christian man, there can be nothing either more necessary or profitable, than the knowledge of Holy Scripture ; forasmuch as in it is contained *God's true word*, setting forth his glory, and also man's duty. And there is *no truth nor doctrine, necessary for our justification and everlasting salvation*, but that is, *or may be*, drawn out of that fountain and well of truth. For in Holy Scripture is *fully contained* what we ought to do, and what to eschew, what to believe, what to love, and what to look for at God's hands at length. In these books we shall find the *Father from whom*, the *Son by whom*, and the *Holy Ghost in whom*, all things have their being and keeping up ; and these three Persons to be but one God, and one substance. In these books we may learn to know ourselves, how vile and miserable we be ; and also to know God, how good he is of himself, and how he maketh us and all creatures partakers of his goodness. We may learn also in these books to know God's will and pleasure, as much as, for this present time, is convenient for us to know, And, as the great clerk and godly preacher, St. John Chrysostom, saith, *whatsoever is required to the salvation of man, is fully contained in the Scripture of God.*”

Homily on the Reading and Knowledge of Holy Scripture.

PART I, page 1.

PRAYER.

O gracious God and most merciful Father, which hast vouchsafed us the rich and precious jewell of thy Holy Word, assist us by thy Spirit that it may be written in our hearts to our everlasting comfort; to reforme us; to renew us according to thine own image; to build us up, and edifie us into the perfect building of thy Christe; sanctifying, and increasing in us all heavenlie vertues. Grant this O heavenlie Father, for Jesus Christe's sake. Amen.

TO
THE VERY REVEREND
HORATIO TOWNSEND NEWMAN,
DEAN OF CORK,

WHOSE LONG, FAITHFUL, AND ZEALOUS LABOURS,
IN PROMOTING SCRIPTURAL EDUCATION AND KNOWLEDGE
AMONG BOTH CLERGY AND LAITY OF THIS DIOCESE,
ARE GENERALLY KNOWN AND JUSTLY APPRECIATED,

THESE PAGES
IN TOKEN OF CHRISTIAN ESTEEM
NO LESS THAN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF PERSONAL KINDNESS,
ARE
BY HIS FRIEND AND KINSMAN,
AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

Derry, March 25, 1843.



ORAL TEACHING

NOT

ORAL TRADITION.

Religion is a subject, in which all are deeply interested, and therefore, equally concerned to enquire, "what is truth?"* In every such enquiry however, the first thing to be ascertained is, the Rule of Faith, or standard by which religious belief and practice should be regulated. Without this, we have no fixed or certain guide, either as to the doctrines or duties of true religion; and by this only can we know, on what our faith and hope are really founded. Therefore the necessity of examining carefully the alleged claim of Oral Tradition, whether put forward by

* John xviii. 38.

Divines of Oxford or of Rome, to constitute part of the Rule of Faith, along with, and in addition to, the written word of God.

In nothing indeed, do the Churches of England and Rome more widely differ, than in their respective standards of religious belief and practice : and hence, in great measure, their want of agreement on other points.

In her Sixth Article, the Church of England distinctly states Holy Scripture to be her rule of faith, plainly and pointedly declaring, that she has, and needs, no other ; because it “ containeth *all things necessary to salvation*, so that, whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.” Thus steadily and nobly does she maintain the completeness of Holy Scriptures, as a full, perfect, and sufficient rule, both of faith and practice, in things necessary to salvation.

At the same time, it is quite true, that she highly reverences antiquity ; and aiming to model herself in all things after the primitive church, *formed*, as well as *founded*, by our Saviour and his Apostles, she attaches great weight and just importance to the early, authentic, testimony of *ecclesiastical* tradition, or in other words, Christian Church history, in “ matters relating to order, rites, and ceremonies.”

She does not however, so much as *mention*, *Divine* or *Apostolic* tradition, i. e. *inspired Oral tradition* handed down from Christ or his Apostles, forming part of the rule of faith, and possessing authority equal, or similar, or equivalent, to Holy Scripture.

In her 34th Article, she speaks indeed of tradition, but in such a manner, as to shew plainly the sense in which alone she acknowledges its existence, and thus, put it, as possessing only human authority, on a totally different level from Holy Scripture.

“It is not necessary,” says the Article, “that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one, and utterly alike, for at all times they have been divers, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and men’s manners, so that *nothing be ordained against God’s word.*”

Then, in order to shew the nature and degree of respect due to them, it is added, “whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely, doth openly break the traditions and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the word of God, and be ordained and approved of common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, (that others may fear to do the like,) as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurteth the authority of the Magistrate, and woundeth the consciences of the weak brethren.”

The Article lastly declares, that “every particular or national Church, hath authority to ordain, change, and abolish, ceremonies or rites

of the Church, ordained only by man's authority;
so that all things be done to edifying."*

So far as we can discover, the Church of England, no where, in her Liturgy, Articles, or Homilies, acknowledges any other kind of Oral tradition than that here spoken of, which evidently is not of Divine authority, and does not relate to matters of faith, or things requisite or necessary to salvation; and thus, we may safely assert, that the only Oral tradition which she anywhere admits, or even alludes to, is *entirely human*, both in its origin, authority, and application.

How far she makes use of such tradition, namely, Church history and early Christian writings, for another purpose, i. e. to explain, throw light upon, or fix the sense of, Holy Scriptures; may perhaps be best explained, in the words of the venerable Bishop Patrick:

"We allow, says this learned Prelate, that tradition gives us a considerable assistance in

* Book of Common Prayer. 34th Article of Religion.

such points as are not in so many letters and syllables contained in the Scriptures, but may be gathered from them by good and manifest reasoning. Or, in plainer words perhaps, whatever tradition justifies any doctrine, *that may be proved by the Scriptures though not found in express terms there*, we acknowledge to be of great use, and readily receive and follow it; as serving very much to establish us more firmly in that truth, *when we see all Christians adhered to it.* “This may be called a *confirming tradition*; of which we have an instance, in the doctrine of *infant baptism*; which some ancient Fathers call an *Apostolical Tradition*. *Not that it cannot be proved by any place of Scripture*; NO SUCH MATTER; for, though we do not find it written in so many words, that infants are to be baptized, or that the Apostles baptized infants; yet, *it may be proved out of the Scriptures*; and the Fathers themselves, who call it an *Apostolical tradition*, do alledge testimonies of the Scriptures to make it

good. And therefore, we may be sure, *they comprehend the Scriptures within the name of Apostolical tradition,* and believed that this doctrine *was gathered out of the Scriptures, though not expressly treated of there.*

“ In like manner, he adds, we, in this Church, assert the authority of bishops above presbyters by a divine right ; as appears in the book of consecration of Bishops, where the person to be ordained to this office, expresses his belief, that he is truly called to this Ministration, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, this, we are persuaded, *may be plainly enough proved,* to any man that is ingenuous, and will fairly consider things, *out of the Holy Scriptures,* WITHOUT THE HELP OF TRADITION. But we also take in the assistance of this for the conviction of gainsayers ; and by the perpetual practice and Tradition of the Church from the beginning, *confirm our Scripture proofs* so strongly, that he seems to us very obstinate, or extremely preju-

diced, that yields not to them. "And therefore, to make our doctrine in this point more authentic, our church hath put both these proofs together in the preface to the Form of giving orders, which begins in these words: It is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture *and ancient authors*, that from the Apostle's time, there have been three orders of Ministers in Christ's Church, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons."*

It is plain therefore, that the Church of England *founds no doctrine or practice whatever, as of divine origin and obligation*, on oral tradition; though she uses it, *as human evidence*, to establish the sound and primitive character of doctrines and practices which she believes to be taught and contained in Holy Scripture; such as, the Lord's Day, Episcopacy, and Infant Baptism.

In the words of another able and distinguished Prelate of our Church, Bishop Marsh; "all doctrines whatever, which have no other founda-

* Discourse about Tradition, part 2, § 5.

tion than that of Tradition, *are rejected by the Church of England* ; and it is this very rejection, *which constitutes the vital principle of the Reformation.* *It is the vital principle of the Reformation to admit no doctrine, or article of faith, unless it can be proved by Holy Scripture.*”* The case however, he goes on to say, is widely different with respect to mere ceremonies, in which as her 34th Article states, the Church of England only requires, that *nothing be ordained against God’s word, and that all things be done to edifying.* Yet, it is plain, that even in this she does not yield to the authority of Oral tradition ; because, as has been shewn from the 34th Article, she claims authority herself to ordain, change, and abolish, rites and ceremonies ; clearly implying, that if edifying, they may be received, although *not sanctioned by tradition* : and if unedifying, ought to be rejected, even though supported by it.† To

* Marsh’s comparative view, chap. 7. p. 129.

† Ibid. p. 131.

this we shall just add, that as to those confessedly most ancient Documents, the three Creeds, she states herself in her eighth article, that the authority on which she receives them is this ; *not that they are attested by Oral tradition*, but that *“ they may be proved by most certain warrant of Holy Scripture.”* To sum up all in the words of the pious Bishop Beveridge. “ Holy Scripture containeth nothing but the will of God, and *the whole will of God*; so that there is *nothing necessary to be believed concerning God*, nor *done in obedience unto God by us*, but what is here revealed to us ; and therefore all traditions of men which are contrary to this word of God, are necessarily to be abhorred ; and all traditions of men *not recorded in this word of God*, are *not necessarily to be believed*. What is here written we are bound to believe because it is written, and what is not here written, we are not bound to believe because it is not here written.”*

* Discourse on 39 Articles, vol. 1. p. 257.

This then, may perhaps suffice, to shew the real views and sentiments of the Church of England on this important subject, and satisfy the candid enquirer, that her Rule of Faith *exclusively is*, Holy Scripture; and that she speaks, and makes use of, Oral Tradition, *not as a record of Divine doctrine*: but, merely as, more or less valuable, ancient, authentic, *human testimony*, to the truth and confirmation of what is, or may be, *found in Scripture*.

The Church of Rome on the contrary, denies the allsufficiency of Scripture, and has adopted a two-fold Rule of faith, the parts of which are, Scripture and Tradition; the latter, entirely independant of, yet possessing equal authority with, Holy Scripture, because proceeding, in her opinion, no less from Christ and his Apostles, though *transmitted through a different channel*.

Here then, it must at once be perceived, is a fundamental difference between the two churches;

a difference affecting the very basis, as well as standard, of saving faith.

Before however, we proceed to ascertain the exact sentiments of the Church of Rome on this subject, it may be well perhaps, to explain briefly *what tradition means*, and *what it is*. The word may be, and often is, used in different significations; and therefore, in order to avoid confusion in the difficult work of separating truth from error, it is absolutely necessary to know those various senses in which it is employed.

In itself, the word tradition, simply signifies, a delivery or handing from one person to another; and may relate, either to the TIME, METHOD, or MATTER, of that delivery.

As to *time*, it may imply *present*, just as well as *past*, instruction. Thus, in 2nd Thess. 2. 15; where St. Paul says, "therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle;" he evidently alludes, not to doctrines received from

ages past, but, *to those instructions, he had himself recently given them.*

It is also however, used to signify instruction received from former times, as in Matt. 15. 2. 3. where the scribes, finding fault with his disciples for transgressing the tradition *of the elders*, our Saviour replies to them, as we do to the Church of Rome when she finds fault with us in like manner, “ why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” Here then, it evidently means, doctrines handed down from former ages.

As to MODE of transmission or delivery, Tradition may likewise be divided into *two kinds*; *oral* and *written*; the one implying, delivery *by word of mouth*; the other, by *means of writing*. In this latter sense, one often used both in the New Testament, and by the early Fathers, the Scriptures come under this general name, as *inspired written tradition*, i. e. Divine doctrines delivered down to us *in writing*. *Oral tradition*

however, in the twofold character of a safe and trustworthy mode of communicating *divine truth* from *former ages*, is that about which we differ from the Church of Rome ; not indeed denying that things may possibly be thus transmitted ; but strongly and emphatically asserting, that as a *mode of transmission*, we regard it as most unsafe, dangerous, and uncertain ; and, as implying *matter transmitted*, that *we find no sufficient evidence to shew, that any Divine truths, ordinances, or doctrines, HAVING THE SEAL OF GOD, and not contained in Holy Scripture, have been thus transmitted to us.* If such it is said, there are, though not to be found in Scripture, we ask, *what are they, and where are they ?* If it be said in reply, “ they relate to the number and administration of the Sacraments, prayers for the dead, the celebration of the Mass, seasons of fasting, and other like matters, and almost all of them are to be found in the writings of the Fathers,*”

* Delahogue de Traditione, p. 420.

we demand again, how are they proved to be of divine origin and authority? How are we to know that those now brought forward as such, are the very words that were spoken, or doctrines that were taught, by Christ and his inspired Apostles? *Mere human testimony*, like the writings of the Fathers and decrees of General Councils, produced as an evidence of *divinely inspired Oral Tradition*, can never prove the point in question; namely *the Divine Authorship of this or that particular practice or doctrine*. Nor indeed, can any thing, either preserve, or prove it, but something like Holy Scripture, *lasting in its own nature; not liable to change; and WHICH IS ALSO, ITSELF INSPIRED.*

Besides however, what it implies as to *time* and *mode* of delivery, the word Tradition, as has been just remarked, signifies, *the matter itself delivered*.

And now we come to state the doctrine of the Church of Rome, in opposition to

what, we have already shewn, to be, on this point, the doctrine of the Church of England. She, as has been stated, admits, *human*, i. e. *historical or ecclesiastical tradition*, ascribing to it, in its proper use and place, great importance and value; more especially in establishing the genuineness and authenticity of the New Testament; and proving that her views of Scripture are both ancient and orthodox; but she altogether denies, that there is *any tradition, possessing Divine weight or inspired apostolic authority, except that, which has come down to us by writing, in the Holy Scriptures.*

The doctrine of the Church of Rome is far, far, different. She teaches, that independant of Holy Scripture, there are no less than *three kinds of tradition, in the sense of matters orally delivered*; i. e. doctrines and practices not transmitted to us by *inspired writing*, but originally taught by word of mouth, and handed down by ecclesiastical records.

The 1st she calls, *Divine tradition*; or doctrines delivered by Christ himself to his Apostles, and *taught* by them, but *not written*; though recorded since in the writings of the Fathers, and Decrees of General Councils.

The 2nd she calls, *Apostolic tradition*; or, doctrines and observances, originating from the Apostles under the guidance and suggestion of the Holy Spirit, *but which are not to be found in their writings*.

These two, constitute what the Church of Rome calls, "*the unwritten word of God*," and which, as to weight, value, and importance, she authoritatively declares to be in all respects equal to, and on a level with, Holy Scripture. Practically however, it will be found, that she makes it far superior, and so in reality puts the *written*, completely *in subjection to the unwritten, word*. For, assuming that oral tradition is full and clear, where Scripture is obscure and ambiguous, she does in fact, give it a weight and authority, far

superior to Scripture ; and thus, though Tradition, as part of the Rule of Faith, is by her, in theory, only made *equal* to Scripture, in practice it becomes *paramount* to it.*

Nor, let it be for a moment supposed, that this is mere unsupported assertion. We have it on the high authority of Cardinal Bellarmine himself, who in the fourth chapter of his treatise on the word of God, speaks thus. "Scripture very often is so ambiguous and perplexed, that unless explained by some infallible authority, *it is unintelligible ; without unwritten tradition, the Gospel is an empty name, i. e. only sounds and words, without sense.*"† The reader then, can easily judge for himself, whether Holy Scripture,

* Bishop Marsh's comparative view, chap. 1. p. 15.

† "*Sæpiissime Scriptura ambigua et perplexa est; ut nisi ab aliquo, qui errare non possit, explicetur, non possit intelligi.*"

"*Sine traditionibus non scriptis, Evangelium esse purum nomen, id est, esse tantum voces et verba sine sensu.*" Bellarmine de verbo Dei, cap. 4.

or Oral Tradition, is by the Church of Rome made practically *first in weight and importance*.

The Gospel, she plainly tells us, "without unwritten tradition is a mere name, words and sounds without sense;" and alas, there are too many, who disown her communion, but in this respect, seem to have adopted her sentiments. May it not be well then, to remind both her and them, of those, whom Irenæus tells us of, who taught in his day, "*that truth could not be found, out of the Scriptures, by those to whom tradition was unknown, forasmuch as it, (truth), was not delivered by writing, but by word of mouth.*" The only difference is, that she and they assure us that this is *the true doctrine*, and that they who hold it are the ORTHODOX; whereas he pronounces those who held it *in the second century*,—HERETICS.*

* "Quia non possit ex his (Scripturis scil.) inveniri veritas ab his qui nesciant traditionem. Non enim per literas traditionem illam, sed per vivam vocem. Irenæus contra hæres. lib. 3. cap. 2.

The 3rd kind of oral tradition, held by the Church of Rome, is, *ecclesiastical tradition*; the same that our 34th Article, already referred to, speaks of, as "the traditions of the Church." Dr. Delahogue, late Professor of dogmatic theology at Maynooth, describes it as, "certain ancient customs, introduced by the Bishops, or originated by the people, which have gradually, by tacit consent, acquired, says, Cardinal Bellarmine, the force of a law."—On both sides therefore, this kind of tradition is confessedly admitted to be of *human origin*, and to form no part of the rule of faith; the difference between us here being, that our Church declares, that such traditions, having been ordained only by man's authority, may be abolished or changed; whereas, the Church of Rome regards them as having acquired by immemorial usage, the force of a law."*

Here however, we have no controversy of any moment with the Church of Rome; the real

* Marsh's Comparative View. p. 11.

question between us being, not, *as to human ordinances* ; but, *whether any doctrines of DIVINE origin and authority taught by Christ and his Apostles, independantly of those recorded in Holy Scripture, are known to have come down to us by means of oral tradition.*

Of this important question we take the negative side, and doing so, charge the Church of Rome, in the words of our Divine Lord and Saviour, according to our translation, with “teaching *for Divine doctrines*, the commandments of men ;” or, as she herself translates the passage, but which comes very nearly to the same thing ; “teaching *doctrines and commandments of men* ;” * *along with, and as part of, the word of God.*

And what is their defence and reply ? It is simply this ; that there is an *unwritten*, as well as, a *written word of God*, and accordingly, that what they teach, are not human commandments,

* Douay Testament, St. Matt. 15. 15.

but divine and apostolic doctrines, *taught orally*, and handed down by oral tradition and ecclesiastical writings; and they refer us for proof that there really are such, to *Scripture; tradition itself; and, theological arguments.*

Let us then, briefly examine these alleged proofs, humbly beseeching the blessed Spirit of wisdom and truth, to guide us to a right conclusion.

The chief *Scriptural* evidence brought forward is as follows. In the Gospel of St. John, 16. 12. our Saviour says to his disciples; "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now, howbeit, when He, the Spirit of truth shall come, he will lead you into all truth." This passage however, it is plain, proves nothing whatever for *oral tradition*, because, the Spirit of truth having *come long before the New Testament was written*; and the Apostles being thus led into *all truth before they wrote*, we may assuredly believe that *all truth* is to be found in their *writings*; and there is no room whatever there-

fore for the inference sought to be established by the Church of Rome, that all Divine truth is not contained in the *written word*.

Again, Acts, 1. 3. is brought forward; in which it is said, that Christ “ shewed himself alive to his disciples after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and *speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*” But this, we say in like manner, took place *before the writing of the New Testament*; and therefore, proves nothing for Oral Tradition. At the same time, we mean not to assert, that every word spoken by Christ or his Apostles, is recorded in Holy Scripture. Scripture itself declares the very reverse. St. John in his last chapter, even goes so far as to say, “ there are also many *other* things which Jesus did; the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written;” and again he says, “ Many other signs truly did Jesus in

the presence of his disciples, which *are not written in this book* ; but, he adds, bearing the most express testimony to the allsufficiency of the written word, “ *these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have life, through his name.*”* It is plain therefore, that although every thing spoken by Christ, has not been recorded in writing, *the substance of all having been thus preserved*, we have no need of any thing but *what has been written* ; and therefore, should not seek to be “ *wise above, or rather, beyond, what is written.*”†

2 Thess. 2. 15, is also a passage greatly relied on. “ Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions, which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” Here however let us ask, what is really meant by the word traditions in this verse, and what does the Apostle evidently intend by it? He distinguishes no

* John 20. 30, 31.

† 1 Cor. 4, 6.

doubt, between traditions taught by *word*, and those taught by *writing*. But does he mean by the former, *doctrines at first indeed orally delivered by inspired persons, but thence transmitted to the Thessalonians by human, uninspired, channels for several ages*? Surely, both text and context plainly shew that he did not. There can be no doubt, that he merely meant the instructions he had *himself, an inspired Apostle, just before given them*, either by letter, or by word of mouth.

Rightly understood therefore, this passage gives no countenance to oral tradition, in the Romish and objectionable sense of the word; if we just consider for a moment *the vast difference between ORAL TEACHING, direct and immediate from the mouth of an inspired Apostle; and ORAL TRADITION, or the handing down things as apostolic teaching, indirectly and from former ages, by means of mere uninspired human testimony*. If we had now an *inspired Apostle amongst us*,

we should, as St. Paul here directs, value and regard his *oral*, just as much, as his *written*, instructions ; but, this in no way encourages, nor, in the least degree warrants, our giving heed to doctrines as divine, *not coming immediately from the lips of an inspired Apostle*, but merely said to be his, upon the authority of men, *living in after ages, and not themselves inspired*.

St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, 2. 2, is also brought forward, in proof, not only, that many things were by the Apostle *orally taught*, which no one disputes, but, directed by him, to be *orally transmitted*, which we altogether deny.

“ The things that thou hast heard of me, says the Apostle, among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, *who shall be able to TEACH others also.*” Who does not at once however clearly see, that what the Apostle here has in his view, is, *not, the Oral transmission*, but, the *Oral teaching* of Divine truth ; in other words, *the communication of Divine and saving know-*

ledge to mankind through the preaching of the Gospel by a constant succession of faithful men, as duly appointed and regularly commissioned witnesses? Where then, is the argument for Oral tradition?

What we say therefore, is simply this :

The safe *transmission* of all necessary truth being otherwise provided for, by the INSPIRED CHANNEL of *Holy Scripture*, this passage, clearly establishes the necessity and authority of a *properly appointed Christian Ministry* for TEACHING DIVINE TRUTH, but gives no Apostolic countenance to *Oral tradition*, AS AN APPROVED METHOD OF TRANSMITTING DIVINE TRUTH. Fully admitting then, that God makes use of UNINSPIRED TEACHING OF *Divine truth* ; but confidently asserting that there is NO SUCH THING, AS UNINSPIRED TRANSMISSION OF DIVINE TRUTH, we maintain, that this passage relates, to THE ORAL TEACHING, and NOT THE ORAL TRADITION, *of things requisite and necessary to salvation.*

It is not indeed without surprise, alarm,* and extreme regret, that we have of late seen ministers of the Church of England, anxiously, but vainly, endeavouring to prove from St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy, that the Apostle himself recognized a system of *Divine oral tradition*,

* "Is there not a cause," with such facts as the following, taking place before our eyes. "It has come within my own knowledge," says the Rev. J. H. Stewart, "that the course which some of the leaders of the Tractarians recommend, ~~is~~ *the highway to Rome*. It would scarcely be conceived, that a clergyman of the Church of England should recommend a young person wavering in her attachment to the Protestant Faith, to take a vow of celibacy; and then, without the least consultation with her parents or friends on the subject, himself privately administer this vow;—and afterwards, when this same young person was distressed in mind, on account of this vow, which she had so rashly taken, that this same Clergyman should recommend a visit to a Roman Catholic convent. Yet, such I know to be the fact; and we might be expected, that young person, following this advice, within a very short time after being within the walls of that convent, renounced our Protestant Church, and joined the Church of Rome."—Sermons on Prayer, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, preached at St. Bride's Church, Liverpool, on New Year's Day, 1843.

then known as such, and since continued, independent of Holy Scripture.*

The passages chiefly brought forward for this purpose are, 1 Tim. 6. 20. "O Timothy, keep *that which is committed to thy trust.*" And 2 Tim. 1. 14. "*That good thing which was committed unto thee,* keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." Hence, it is with more ingenuity than force of reasoning argued, that the *deposit*, or *good thing* spoken of as *committed to Timothy*, was a system of *oral tradition* altogether independent of Scripture.

But here again we say, look to the context, and it will plainly appear, that it was, not *Oral transmission*, but *Oral teaching* of divine truth, that was in the Apostles mind. His own departure was then at hand, and he was therefore the more anxious, not only that Timothy should be himself, but see that others also were, faithful preachers of the Gospel. Accordingly we find

* Vide especially, Keble's Sermon on Tradition.

him, 2 Tim. 4. 1. 5, addressing his beloved spiritual Son, in these solemn words. "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, *preach* the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine; for the time will come, when they will not endure *sound doctrine*, but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves *teachers, having itching ears*; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables; but, watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; *do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry.*"

In 1 Tim. 1. 3, we find him directing Timothy to attend carefully to the preaching of others also. "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest *charge some that they teach no other doctrine*--so do. Now the end of the charge, or commandment, is charity, out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned."

And in the 18th verse he adds, "*This charge, I commit* unto thee Son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest *war a good warfare.*"

What ground then, we ask, is there for the inference that "the good thing or deposit" here spoken of, was a system of oral doctrine *not recorded in Scripture*? Is not the blessed Gospel, itself a sacred deposit? Is not the ministerial office a solemn trust; a good thing committed to the minister's charge, and of which he must afterwards give an account? We think St. Paul felt it to be such, when he says, 1 Cor. 4. 1, "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and *Stewards of the mysteries of God.*" And we think also the whole train of the Apostle's reasoning clearly shews, that the "good thing or deposit" by him committed to Timothy, was no other, than that which had been committed to himself, and of which he speaks in 1 Tim. 1. 11, where he calls it, "the glorious gospel of

the blessed God, which was *committed to my trust.*"

It is therefore, we hesitate not to assert, *a mere groundless assumption*, to say that the Apostle here recognizes in any way a system of Oral Tradition, distinct from, and independant of Holy Scripture. Nor is there the slightest evidence to shew, that the word translated "good thing or deposit," was a technical term then made use of to signify a system of oral traditionary instruction.* On the contrary, the Apostle uses the same word in the verse but one before, to signify the safe keeping of his soul; "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him," "my deposit," against that day. 2 Tim. i. 12.

On the whole then, it is most clear, that the good thing committed by the Apostle to Timothy was, the glorious Gospel, of which Timothy was

* Dublin Chrisitan Examiner, third series, Vol. ii. p. 808.

By St. Paul ordained a minister; that Gospel which the Most High has caused, not only to be *delivered*, but to be *written by inspiration of His Spirit, as the divinely appointed means of its* AUTHORITY TRANSMISSION; but which, BEING committed to their trust, Timothy and others, not themselves inspired, have from time to time been employed to TEACH.

The early Fathers are likewise brought forward as evidences on behalf of inspired oral tradition. In reply to this, we say, not only do they bear the clearest testimony to the all-sufficiency of Scripture; as the great Athanasius when he says, "the Holy Scriptures, given by inspiration of God, are of themselves sufficient for the discovery of truth;"* but they also, put oral tradition when they speak of it separately, in *subjection to Scripture*, as we do, and not *on a level with it*, as the Church of Rome does. Thus, Cyprian, on the subject of an alleged tradition against the

* *Orat. contra gentes.*—*Initio* Vol. I.

rebaptizing of heretics, says : "if it be commanded in the Gospel, or in the Epistles of the Apostles or in the Acts, let this holy tradition be observed." *

In fact, one of the earliest and best of them all, Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, and friend of Polycarp the disciple of St. John, who wrote in the second century, has put an end to inspired oral tradition as distinguished from, and independent of, Holy Scripture, in these remarkable words ; "By no other persons have we been instructed in the dispensation of salvation, than by those through whom the Gospel has been delivered to us ; *which Gospel they AT FIRST PREACHED BY WORD OF MOUTH, but afterwards BY GOD'S WILL, handed down to us in writing, to be in time to come the foundation and pillar of our faith.*" †

* " Si in Evangelio præcipitur, aut in Epistolis Apostolorum. aut in Actis. observetur hæc sancta traditio." Ep. 74 ad Pompeium.

† " Non enim per alios dispositionem salutis nostræ cognovimus, quam per eos per quos Evangelium pervenit ad nos ; *quod quidem tunc præconaverunt ; postea vero, per Dei volun-*

Can any thing, we ask, more clearly attest the sole supremacy of Scripture, and take away all footing from oral tradition, than these decisive words: "Which Gospel, they then, or in the first instance, *preached by word of mouth*, but *afterwards by the will of God*, i. e. his express direction and command, delivered, or gave as a tradition, to us, *in writing, to be in time to come*, the *foundation and pillar of our faith*."

But even, admitting that some of the Fathers do speak favourably of oral tradition, let us remember, that at best, they are but *uninspired men* and therefore, their assertion, whether it be true or false, *does not in itself possess an authority sufficient to impose the weight of Divine obligation*. *We cannot receive what they say, as if it came from God*. Therefore we say with the venerable Irenæus, No tradition but Scripture. In the

tatem, in Scripturis nobis tradiderunt, fundamentum et columnam fidei nostræ futuram."—Irenæus Adversus Hæres. lib. iii. cap. 1.

words of that great defender and translator of the written word, St. Jerome, "All that is said after the Apostles must be set aside, and *have no authority*. However holy, however learned, any man may be who comes after the Apostles *he can be allowed no authority*." * Not one of them can even go so far as to say, "I heard such and such words, or received such and such directions from the lips of an inspired Apostle." They only state the prevailing report of the day in which they lived, or else their own belief and opinion as to what was handed down from those who went before them, and thus, *the link which alone, by connecting it with actual inspiration, can confer the stamp of Divine authority, or impose the solemn obligation of a Divine command,* IS IN THIS CASE ENTIRELY WANTING. Even granting that the Apostles *spoke* much which they did *not write*, still, REASON ITSELF, may plainly shew,

* "Quamvis ergo sit aliquis post apostolos, disertus non habeat auctoritatem." Hieron. in Psalm. 86.

that it is impossible in the very nature of things, that any of this can come down to us, *as inspired oral tradition attested only by human evidence,* WITH THE AUTHORITY AND FORCE OF INSPIRATION.

It must doubtless be most satisfactory to find our doctrines and views of Scripture, illustrated and confirmed by the belief and practice of the Primitive Church, and to be well assured, that the immediate followers of the Apostles, acted, thought, and read, as we now think, and act, and read. Still, however, we are not to confound what is only useful and interesting, however valuable we may ourselves esteem it, with what as articles of belief, are actually and absolutely necessary for salvation. Tradition, may supply the former, *but it can do nothing whatever towards furnishing the latter.** "To the LAW and to the TESTIMONY, if we speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in us."†

* Bishop Shuttleworth, "Not tradition, but Scripture."
Page 78.

† Isaiah, viii. 23.

The main *theological argument* brought forward in support of inspired oral tradition, is this ; that from the fall of Adam, to the time of Moses, it was the guide of the Church, and the *sole means* of preserving true religion in the world, and that it has not since been superseded by Scripture.

In reply, we observe, First, that it has been already shewn, on good authority, that *inspired oral tradition has been superseded by Scripture* ; and Secondly, *we deny that it ever was the entire guide* of the Church, *or sole means of preserving divine truth* ; because, throughout that period of time to which the assertion applies, namely, from Adam to Moses, *there was a constant succession of Divine revelations.*

And what is the fact? So little able was oral tradition, even with the assistance of frequent Divine manifestations, and a length of human life never since heard of, to preserve Divine truth, or keep true religion sound and pure, that we

find, it was only by immediate revelations of himself to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others of the Patriarchs from time to time, that God preserved his Church from being *altogether swallowed up in ignorance and idolatry*.

If the argument therefore proves anything, it makes altogether *against* oral tradition, and *not for it*; because it clearly shews, that, *when tried it did not answer*, and therefore cannot now be considered or relied on, as a safe or satisfactory means, either of conveying or perpetuating, Divine truth.

It has been already proved, that Holy Scripture, rightly understood, does neither support nor sanction the doctrine of *inspired oral tradition*; we would now go somewhat farther, and shew, that it is decidedly opposed to it; in short that it is not merely, not for it, but completely against it.

What do we find on opening the New Testament? Our blessed Saviour frequently speaking

of, and quoting Scripture, with the highest possible approbation, but *invariably* in the strongest terms, reprobating and condemning oral tradition; not even so much as once mentioning it without marked disapprobation. We ask then, is not this in itself, a striking and a startling fact? O, but, says the Church of Rome, these were traditions, not merely *independent of Scripture*, but *contrary to it*. And so, we answer, are your traditions; and therefore it is that we say to you in the words of our Lord himself, "full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." For instance, this is God's most solemn commandment, as your own Douay Bible testifies, though it is altogether omitted in your smaller Catechisms for the use of the people, who might possibly be somewhat startled by it; "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt

not bow down to them, nor worship them.”* But what says your tradition? As we find it recorded in the 25th session of the Council of Trent, it declares, “that the images of Christ, of the Virgin, and of the other saints, *are to be had and kept in Churches*, and that *due honour and worship are to be paid to them*; that is, as is afterwards explained, *we are to kiss them, and uncover our heads and fall down before them*; because the honour which is shewn to them, is referred to the *prototypes which they represent*;† words which plainly shew, that it is *real adoration and worship* that is paid to them, directly contrary to the positive command of God.

* Exodus, Chap. xx. 4, 5.

† Imagines porro Christi, deiparæ Virginis, et aliorum sanctorum in templis præsertim habendas et retinendas eisque debitum honorem et venerationem impertiendam, quoniam honos qui eis exhibetur, refertur ad prototypa, quæ illæ representant: ita ut per imagines quas osculamur, et coram quibus caput aperimus, et procumbimus, Christum adoremus et sanctos quorum illæ similitudinem gerunt, veneremur.” Sessio 25 de Purgatorio, p. 305 306.

Again, God says, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."* But what says tradition? It declares, in the words of the same council, "that it is *both good and useful to worship and pray to, angels and saints;*"† and thus, whatever be the kind of worship offered to them, in fact make them *mediators between us and God*, although the Scripture plainly and positively declares, that "there is but *one Mediator between God and men*, the man Christ Jesus;"‡ "who is able to save unto the uttermost, all them that come unto God by him, *seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them;*"§ and accordingly says, "come unto ME, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest;"|| and who therefore is our *only Mediator*

* Matthew iv. 10.

† Bonum atque utile esse suppliciter eos (sanctos) invocare &c.; ad eorum orationes, opem, auxilium confugere. Sessio 25 de Purgatorio, p. 305.

‡ 1 Timothy, ii. 5.

§ Hebrews vii. 25.

|| Matthew xi. 28.

*both of redemption and intercession : having by his work of expiatory sacrifice finished upon the cross, "by one offering perfected for ever them that are sanctified."**

Besides however, the heavy charge which we are thus obliged to bring against the Church of Rome, of "making the commandments of God of none effect by her *tradition*; when speaking on the subject of the Rule of Faith, we are compelled to make against her, the no less serious accusation of adulterating the written word of God, and thus in an equal degree though in another way, "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." We allude now of course to the books called the Apocrypha, and stated in the 6th article of the Church of England, expressly on the authority of *Saint Jerome himself the translator of the Vulgate*, not to be canonical, i. e. not to be within the rule or canon of inspired

* Hebrews, x. 14.

Scripture. Yet these very books, the Council of Trent, in its 4th session, expressly enumerates among the books of Holy Scripture, and declares that "whosoever does not receive them, and all parts of them, as sacred and canonical, *i. e.* truly inspired, *is accursed.*" Now we merely ask, is the 2nd book of Maccabees inspired, in which suicide, that horrible crime, at which even fallen humanity shudders, *is spoken highly of and commended as a noble act?* Or, is the book of Judith inspired, which sets forth the conduct of Simeon and Levi to the Shechemites as an example worthy of imitation, though Jacob, speaking by the Spirit of God, pronounces it cursed and cruel?*

Here then, we say, the Church of Rome is not only in error, but manifestly inconsistent. She exalts tradition to a level with that inspired word which God has "magnified above all his name,"† yet at the same time she does not follow genuine

* Genesis xlix. 7. † Psalm cxxxviii. 2.

tradition ; whereas, we keep tradition in its proper place, but in its legitimate use we closely follow it. For instance, Josephus in the first century ; Melito bishop of Sardis in the second century ; Origen in the third century ; the council of Laodicea, (whose Canons were received into the Code of the Canons of the Universal Church) Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, and several others, in the fourth century ;* all give catalogues of the then acknowledged inspired books of the Old Testament, *and not a single one of them includes the Apocryphal Books among the number.* Here then the Church of Rome, and all who follow in her train, altogether depart from the unanimous voice and tradition of the primitive church ; while the Church of England faithfully follows it, adopting the very catalogue of Scripture thus clearly authenticated, in her 6th Article ; and admitting it into her Canon only on such evidence :

* Burnett on 39 Articles, p. 118.

as that of Athanasius, who distinctly says, "that he delivered those (canonical books,) as *they had received them by tradition*, and as they were received *by the whole Church of Christ*, because some presumed to mix Apocryphal Books with the Divine Scriptures; and therefore, he was set on it by the orthodox brethren, in order to declare the Canonical Books, *delivered as such by tradition, and believed to be of divine inspiration.*"*

So likewise, in forbidding the universal use of the Scriptures; and in denying the cup to the laity in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the Church of Rome directly contradicts the unanimous voice and testimony of genuine, ancient Tradition; while the Church of England, following in these matters the guidance of Holy Scripture, acts in accordance to it.

On the whole then, it is plain, that in annexing the Apocrypha to Holy Scripture as part of

* Athan. Ep. pasch.

God's word ; books ; *never recognized by the Jews, to whom " were committed the Oracles of God ;"** nor ever once quoted by our Saviour and his Apostles, the Church of Rome in 1546, at the 4th Session of the Council of Trent, has, on a fundamental point, completely contradicted the Primitive Church at the Council of Laodicea, in the fourth century, for let who ever chooses take the trouble to examine, and he will find, that both Jerome the translator of the Vulgate, and the Council of Laodicea, give, in the fourth century, a totally different catalogue of the Books of Holy Scripture, (namely that contained in our 6th article) from the catalogue given by the Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century. In other words, they allow the Apocryphal Books, *no place as part of the word of God ;* whereas she pronounces every individual who does not " receive them, and *every part of them*, as sacred and canonical," utterly accursed.†

* Rom. 3—2. † Sess. iv. p. 25. De canonicis Scripturis.

The great evil and danger of all this may be easily perceived. Not only, does it offer fearful dishonour to the true word of God, and place that, which should have our supreme regard and confidence, in a *suspected and secondary light*; but it affords a most ready inlet to error, by so artfully mixing up what is *false* with what is *true*, that it becomes almost impossible to separate them; and truth, even while it seems to be retained, loses all power to resist or overthrow error.

This is strikingly apparent in the Canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, relating to the doctrines of Penance; Extreme Unction; Purgatory; the Sacrifice of the Mass; Indulgences; and many others; in all which, though a slight reference is in some cases made to Scripture, in order to claim for them where it is possible, a sort of *joint foundation*, yet, it is evident, the real basis on which those doctrines are built, is Oral Tradition; not merely Tradition confirming or

enforcing the truth of Scripture, but brought forward as an authority independant of, and coequal with it.

How different this, from God's way of preserving and perpetuating divine truth! Turning to the 30th chapter of Jeremiah, we there find the Lord giving his Prophet this direction; "Write thee all the words that I have spoken unto thee, in a book. For lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the Lord, and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it." It appears from the context, that those amongst whom the Prophet personally laboured, paid little regard to his inspired warnings and exhortations *by word of mouth*; and in consequence, he is here especially directed, *not to leave it to oral tradition to convey these Divine truths to those who should come after, but to write all the words that the Lord had spoken*

unto him, *in a book*, that being thus made certain, *and permanently authoritative*, they might *benefit the generations following*. From the 36th chapter, it also appears, that when Jeremiah had on a particular occasion, to deliver a message from God to the people of Judah, and was unable to do it in person, he did not entrust that divine message to *uninspired lips*, but caused Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, to write from his mouth all the words of the Lord, in a roll of a book, and then, directed him to go and “read them in the ears of all Judah in the house of the Lord.” *Inspiration alone therefore, either directly and personally by word of mouth; or, in all other cases by means of writing, is competent to convey divine truth, and inculcate with God’s authority, those things, which coming from God, are requisite and necessary to salvation.**

* It is quite erroneous to put the celebrated rule of Vincentius Lirinensis in opposition to the all-sufficiency of Scripture, and so, constitute Oral Tradition part of the Rule

We have thus endeavoured not only to shew the wide and fundamental difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, but also, to explain the real doctrines of both churches, respecting the rule and standard of religious belief and practice. In doing this, appeal has been made to authorities well known, and to which, no reasonable person on either side can, we think, fairly object. The views of the Church of England have been taken from

of Faith. Its real object was, not to supercede, but confirm the authority of Scripture, by laying down a rule whereby to prove what are its undoubted doctrines, in opposition to novelties falsely so called. Its proper use and value may be clearly defined by adding to it the words, "si in Scriptura Sacra legatur," in order to shew its legitimate extent and meaning; thus: "Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus, si in Scriptura sacra legatur, credendum est." Thus, their divine character and obligation being founded on Holy Scripture, the Trinity, the Deity and Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Christian Sabbath, &c., are undeniably proved to be original, as well as essential, doctrines of Christianity. See Reeves's Translation with notes, of the Treatise of Vincentius Lirinensis against heretics.

her own Articles, and the writings of three of her highly esteemed Prelates, Bishops Patrick, Beveridge, and Marsh. The doctrines of the Church of Rome likewise, have been proved from her very highest authority, the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, and also, from the works of Cardinal Bellarmine, her ablest controversialist, and Dr. Delahogue, author of a class book on dogmatic theology read at Maynooth. On this evidence it has been shewn, that the Church of England altogether *rejects tradition of every kind, as possessing Divine authority, or forming any part of her Rule of Faith*, which is, exclusively, Holy Scripture; while at the same time, she establishes the authenticity of Scripture by the evidence of ecclesiastical, or historical, tradition, *considered as human testimony*, and also, makes use of it to shew, that her system and doctrines agree both with the model and practice of the Primitive Church.

On the other hand, it has been shewn, how awfully, and as an infallible Church, *irrecoverably*, the Church of Rome has erred, in denying the allsufficiency of God's written word, and daring to add, human writings and oral traditions to what He has solemnly declared, "nothing shall be added,"* thus in the severe and emphatic words of our Saviour, "teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men."

At the same time, it is really curious to observe, how, in doing this, she has closely followed

* Prov. xxx. 5—6. Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. *Add thou not unto his words*, lest he reprove thee and thou be found a liar."

Rev. xxii. 22.—18, 19. "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book. If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." What an awfully solemn warning, both to churches and individuals!

the very footsteps of the present and ancient Jewish Church. The Jews, it is well known, call their traditions, *the Oral law*, asserting, that God gave them to Moses during the forty days he was on Mount Sinai, when he also received the written Law. They believe that Moses instead of writing, afterwards taught, these Oral traditions, by word of mouth to the elders of Israel, with directions that they should in like manner, hand them down to their successors, *as part of the Rule of Faith, every thing that God said in the Mount not having been committed to writing*. Hence arose among the Jews, those pretended Divine traditions of the Oral law, which so frequently drew down the marked displeasure, and pointed rebukes of our blessed Lord and Saviour; and can we then, for a moment doubt, but, if now in like manner upon earth, he would equally condemn, the Oral traditions of the Church of Rome, so similar both in their nature and origin, as not only degrad-

ing to the word, and derogatory to the honour of the Most High God ; but dangerous and destructive to the souls of men !

Nor let any imagine, that he can continue a member of the Roman Catholic Church, and escape the consequences, or free himself from the guilt, that tradition ties, like a mill-stone about his neck, sooner or later to sink him in a deep, far worse than the depth of the sea. It will scarcely be disputed, that no one who does not receive the creed of Pope Pius the 4th is, or can be, a Roman Catholic. And what says this authorised confession of the Roman Catholic faith, “ out of which no one can be saved.”* on the subject before us. “ Apostolic traditions I most firmly receive and embrace ;” † i.e., those very same unwritten, oral traditions, which the

* “ Extra quam nemo salvus esse potest.” Bulla super forma juram, professionis fidei.

† “ Apostolicas et ecclesiasticas traditiones &c., firmissime admitto et amplector.” Ibid.

Council of Trent a little before in its fourth Session, speaks of as distinct from, but to be *received and venerated with equal sentiments of piety and reverence, as the Holy Scriptures.*"*

In the first place, then, we would address the Roman Catholic, and most earnestly and affectionately say, examine well the ground on which your hope of salvation rests. A mistake here, is fatal, because it involves your placing your hope for eternity, not on the rock, but on the sand; for if, as has been now shewn, *INSPIRED Oral tradition*, regarded by you as a light from heaven, is in truth, an *ignis fatuus*; a mere matter of imagination—a thing that has no real existence; what are they doing, who are trusting to it, but building on the sand? And what then are they, whether they call themselves Divines of England or of Rome, who teach others to do so, but blind guides; of which we know

* "*Pari pietatis affectu et reverentia suscipit et veneratur.*" Sess. iv. p. 24.

from our Saviour's own words with reference to this very subject, the awful consequence; "If the blind lead the blind, *both* shall fall into the ditch"* We say then, Men and Brethren, follow the sure guidance of the Apostle Paul, when he tells you, "The Holy Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine; for reproof; for correction; for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto *all* good works.†

Can you have a better adviser? Can you want higher authority? Can you desire more convincing evidence to the allsufficiency of Holy Scripture, *than that of an inspired Apostle?* And if, as St. Paul here distinctly states, Holy Scripture, is "able to make wise unto salvation;" rendering "the man of God perfect,

* Matt. xv. 14.

† 2 Tim. iii. 15--17.

or complete, *thoroughly furnished unto all good works* ;” we appeal to yourselves ; to your own good sense and sound understanding, whether it can possibly be defective, as a Rule of Faith ; or, whether any thing needs to be added to it, to make it an all perfect standard of religious belief and practice in things requisite and necessary to salvation ? “ We speak as unto wise men ; judge ye what we say.”* Of this also be well assured, that if we any of us feel a deficiency, that deficiency is not in Scripture but, *in ourselves* ; and the true and proper remedy for it, is, that pointed out so clearly by our most blessed and allwise Saviour, “ *Search the Scriptures for in them ye think ye have eternal life,*” and are so far right ; “ and they are they which testify of me, yet ye will not come to me,” as they direct ; “ that ye might have life.”†

The church of Rome, indeed, teaches that

* 1 Cor. x. 15.

† John v, 39, 40,

“more evil than good is likely to arise from the indiscriminate reading the Scriptures.”*

We ask, however, was the Apostle Paul of that opinion, when he says of the Berean Christians; “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word of God with all readiness of mind, and *searched the Scriptures daily*, whether those things, *taught them orally even by an inspired Apostle*, were so.”†

Or, was St. Luke of his mind, when he says, “it seemed good to him, to *WRITE* his Gospel, in order that his friend Theophilus, instead of trusting to *oral tradition*, might by *reading* it, “*know the certainty of those things* wherein he had previously been instructed.”‡

It is true, indeed, you are frequently told, that reading of the Bible leads to heresy, and on

* Cum experimento manifestum sit, si sacra Biblia vulgari lingua passim sine discrimine permittantur, plus inde ob hominum temeritatem, detrimenti, quam utilitatis oriri, &c.—Regula 4 de libris Prohibitis.

† Acts xvii. 11.

‡ Luke i. 3, 4.

that very ground are authoritatively warned against it. But here again we say, *what is the fact?* Can any heresy be fairly traced to the simple reading of Holy Scripture? Or, has any heresy of ancient or modern times for its author a man who is only known as a reader of the Bible? Is there, in short, a single instance of heresy and schism, bearing the name of an unlearned person in humble life, who read his Bible, and nothing but his Bible? We believe, the history of the Church, fairly examined, would say, there is not; and would, moreover, tell us, that heresies appear at all times, to have arisen among those whom the world calls wise, and talented, and learned; not a few of whom were Prelates and Priests, but none of them, simple unlearned readers of the Bible. It would show us, also, that the main cause of heresy, ever has been, human pride, and human learning, and human philosophy falsely so called, either corrupting the purity, or overlooking the simplicity,

of divine truth. The reason brought forward, therefore, may possibly be a valid and powerful one, to shew that learning, and knowledge, and philosophy, often greatly abused, are dangerous things, and accordingly, that mankind at large had much better be kept ignorant and illiterate, in order to make them all of one mind ; but it has no force whatever, against the plain duty and solemn command to “ Search the Scriptures.”

Instead, therefore, of attributing heresy and schism to the study of Scripture, the very idea of which we shrink from, as most ungrateful and dishonouring to its glorious Author, we take the very opposite view, and attribute them both, in a very great degree, to the *prohibition and disuse* of Scripture ; by means of which, the true word of God being long kept out of sight, unscriptural doctrines and practices were introduced into the Church, and these, wherever the light of God’s holy word is re-admitted, prove

the main cause of that disunion and separation, which all must deplore, but which is to be attributed, not, properly speaking, to the influence of light, but, to the sad effects of the darkness which preceded it.

On the one hand then, we charge the Church of Rome with being the chief means of causing that schism she seems to dread, and preventing that unity she seems to desire, by taking away the "key of knowledge," without which, unity must be, a unity either of ignorance or error; and on the other hand, we maintain, that the true and proper remedy is, the universal diffusion of that knowledge of Holy Scripture, by which alone, "those who profess and call themselves christians, can be effectually led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in *unity of Spirit*, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life."^{*}

^{*} Collect for all conditions of men—Book of common Prayer.

To the Roman Catholic then we would, with all earnestness say, do not be deterred by any one, from what is both your duty and privilege, but seek, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to "acquaint yourself with God and be at peace" by means of that word which testifies, that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin;"* assures us, that "there is now no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,† and expressly declares that eternal life is the *gift* of God; that "we are saved by grace *through faith*, not of works, lest any man should boast,"‡ and that "other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, which is, Jesus Christ."§

To the Protestant we also say, "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,"|| whether it be, of unscriptural doc-

* 1st John 1, 7. † Rom. 8. 1. ‡ Ephes. ii. 8, 9.

§ 1 Cor. 3. 11. || Gal. 5. 1.

trines, will-worship, or unnecessary and trifling observances, "which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith."* At the same ~~time~~, be careful to shew that the true ground of your Protestantism is this, that you cleave to the Bible because it is *old*, and protest against the errors of the Church of Rome, because, in departing from it, she is *new*. Let this then be your motto; Truth, and *genuine* Antiquity. Learn also, to set less value on names, and more on realities, lest, haply, while crying with all your might, "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we;"† you find yourselves disowned by the Lord of the Temple. See therefore, that you are spiritual, and not merely nominal, Protestants, for it will avail but little to your salvation, to protest ever so loudly against error, unless you by a living faith lay hold upon truth. "If any man," whether Protestant, or Roman Catholic, "be in Christ Jesus,

* 1 Tim. i, 4. † Jer. vii. 4.

he is a new creature.”* Shew then, that such is really your case, and that the grace of God, in which you hope, and to which you look for salvation, “ teaches you, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”†

Honour and obey your Church, your Bishop, your Minister, not indeed as Christ; but as the ordinance, and servants of Christ. Follow them, not ignorantly and blindly, but dutifully, humbly, intelligently and willingly, as they follow Christ, remembering the Apostle’s command; “ Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable to you.”‡ Remember, however, that “ every man shall bear his own burden”§ and “ give an account of himself to God.”|| “ Pre-

* 2 Cor. 5, 17. † Titus ii. 11, 12. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

§ Gal. vi. 5. || Rom. xiv. 12.

pare, then, to meet your God.”* “Fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.”† Be in earnest ; forsake sin ; and look unto Jesus.

To every Reader, we say ; are you following God as a dear child?‡ Is your conversation, such as becometh the Gospel?§ Being justified by faith have you peace with God?|| Are you dead, indeed, unto sin, and alive unto God, through the power of the Holy Ghost, producing in you, not in name only, but in spirit and in truth “ a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.”** Is God’s word a lamp to your feet and a light to your paths?†† Is God’s favour the joy and desire of your heart? Is your life a life of faith or of sight?‡‡ In short, “ are you washed and justified and sanctified in

* Amos iv. 12.

|| Rom. v. 1.

† 1 Tim. vi. 12.

** Church of England Catechism.

‡ Ephes. v. 1.

†† Psal. cxix. 105.

§ Phil. i. 27.

‡‡ 2 Cor. v. 7.

the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God?"* If not, dear Reader, you may indeed have "a form of Godliness, but be assured you have still to experience the power of it."† Seek then, while there is yet time, the blessing obtained for you by your Saviour's prayer, "Sanctify them through thy truth, THY WORD IS TRUTH."‡

* 1 Cor. 6, 11. † 2 Tim. 3. 5. ‡ John 17, 17.

THE END.

